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Foreword

Politically motivated terrorism is a particularly complex and controversial phenomenon. Hence, it must be emphasized at the outset that the approach adopted and the judgments advanced in this brief monograph are those of the author and do not represent a CIA position.

The present paper draws upon and updates an earlier and more comprehensive study by the same analyst, *International and Transnational Terrorism: Diagnosis and Prognosis* (PR 76 10030, April 1976). Unlike the latter work, however, it makes no definitional distinction between terrorist acts that were carried out under governmental direction and those that were not.

Comments or questions concerning this paper will be welcomed. They should be addressed to the Assistant for Public Affairs to the Director, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C. 20505, code 143, extension 7676.

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International Terrorism in 1976

Central Intelligence Agency
Directorate of Intelligence

July 1977

Introduction

The objectives of this summary overview of international terrorism during the past year are threefold.[1] The first is to set the scope and nature of this activity into historical perspective. The second is to draw attention to those trends and developments which would seem to be of particular import with respect to both the likely future dimensions of the problem and its impact on US interests. The third is to apply these judgments and observations to a brief assessment of what may lie ahead during the remainder of 1977.

The last-mentioned goal can, of course, be met in only very general terms. Political violence is a phenomenon that rarely lends itself to firm and detailed prediction. Nonetheless, the problem of international terrorism not only will be with us for years to come, but is likely to evolve in ways that could pose a more serious threat to US interests than in the recent past. And it is also clear that for a host of reasons—countervailing interests and values among them—the development of more effective national and international countermeasures will remain an exceptionally demanding task.

With two exceptions, the charts and tables that accompany this analytical survey juxtapose terrorist statistics for 1976 against those compiled for a number of earlier years. In general, this technique serves the objective of historical perspective quite well. It must be emphasized at the outset, however, that these figures—and the inferences that can be drawn from them—should be viewed with caution. The criteria employed for selecting and classifying the incidents that have been included in these tallies

[1] For the purposes of this discussion, international terrorism is defined as the threat or use of violence for political purposes when (1) such action is intended to influence the attitude and behavior of a target group wider than its immediate victims, and (2) its ramifications transcend national boundaries (as the result, for example, of the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its locale, the identity of its institutional or human victims, its declared objectives, or the mechanics of its resolution).

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are unavoidably arbitrary. Then, too, the number of incidents under review is so small that unintended omissions (of which there are undoubtedly many) or erroneous classification of borderline events could have a statistically significant impact. Finally, there is no way of telling how much of the sharp rise in recorded terrorist incidents over the past decade reflects a real increase in such activity and how much is attributable to more comprehensive and systematic reporting.

General Observations

Regarding international terrorism, 1976 was a year in which:

- More incidents were recorded than ever before.

- The hijacking of commercial aircraft (which had been becoming increasingly rare) experienced a modest revival.

- Risky and demanding kidnaping and barricade-and-hostage operations declined, while the safest and simplest types of terrorist action (bombing, assassination, armed assault, and incendiary attack) registered sharp increases.

- The overall proportion of international terrorist incidents that were directed against US citizens or property dropped to a record low (25.5 percent); but in both relative and absolute terms, the burden born by US commercial facilities and their employees abroad increased markedly over 1975.

- Cuban exile formations emerged among the most active and most disruptive terrorist groups on the international stage.

- Latin American terrorist activity was extended to European soil.

- The majority of the terrorist operations mounted by Palestinian groups were, for the first time since 1971, directed against Arab targets.

- Renewed efforts to develop more effective international countermeasures against terrorist activity were launched in the Council of Europe and the United Nations General Assembly.

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Last year was also notable for two things that did not happen. Despite threats that such action would be forthcoming, members of the Japanese Red Army mounted no new operations. And with very few exceptions, there was no noticeable increase in the sophistication of terrorist tactics, targeting, or weaponry.

In the latter regard, however, it must be added that the potential threat posed by terrorist acquisition of sophisticated man-portable weaponry was brought home on at least two occasions. The first was the attempt, apparently nipped in the bud, of a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) team to shoot down an El Al aircraft with "heat seeking" missiles in late January. (The incident has been widely reported in the press, but so far the Israelis have issued no official statement with respect to its location or the origin of the missiles.) The second was the theft of 15 high-explosive light antitank weapons (LAWs) from a US army maneuver area in southern Germany later in the year.

Since the January missile operation was thwarted in time to escape classification as a full-fledged terrorist incident, it is not reflected in the statistics presented at the end of this paper. Nonetheless, because of the nationally mixed character of the PFLP terrorist team and of the support this group reportedly received from sympathetic states, this aborted attack draws attention to the first two of the several specific problem areas that are treated briefly below.

Transnational Cooperation

The El Al missile affair, the Entebbe hijacking, and the sporadic efforts of European-based representatives of Latin America's Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR) to publicize the goals and activities of their transnational organization all document the trend toward greater cooperation among terrorists of different nationalities that has been observable for several years.[2] Indeed, it seems likely that a number of factors, including the limited human resources now at the disposal of some active terrorist groups in Europe and the increasing difficulties that have been encountered by a number of Latin American formations, made such cooperation appear increasingly advantageous as the year progressed. The initiation of more

[2]The JCR is composed of Argentina's Revolutionary People's Army (ERP), Bolivia's National Liberation Army (ELN), Chile's Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Paraguay's National Liberation Front (FREPALINA), and the remnants of Uruguay's National Liberation Movement (MLN/Tupamaros). Established in 1974 to facilitate joint planning, funding, coordination, and support, the organization has so far been dependent on the ERP for most of its financial and material resources.

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vigorous local countermeasures may also account in part for the spillover of Latin American terrorist activity into Western Europe.[3]

Government Support to Terrorists

As in 1975, direct governmental support of terrorist groups was most evident and most extensive with respect to small Palestinian splinter formations associated with the rejectionist wing of the fedayeen movement. Libya remained at the forefront of such activity, but as perhaps most dramatically demonstrated by the Entebbe affair, a number of other African and Middle Eastern countries were involved as well. In fact, dissatisfaction with the consequences of Syrian intervention in the Lebanese crisis brought Iraq into somewhat greater prominence on the terrorist scene than in the past as the principal patron of the Black June Movement—a small Palestinian group that is believed to have been responsible for at least nine attacks on Syrian or Jordanian targets during the last three months of 1976.

In general, such governmental support as was rendered to terrorist groups in the Western Hemisphere was relatively discreet. Nonetheless, it would appear that despite Castro's recent espousal of a Soviet-endorsed *via pacifica* strategy in Latin America, Cuba continued to maintain contact with a number of terrorism-prone revolutionary groups in that area.

The Vulnerability of the Overseas Installations and Employees of US Firms

In 1975, two out of every five terrorist incidents that were directed against US citizens or facilities abroad victimized US firms or their employees. In 1976, this ratio was three out of five. The increase was partly due to the operation of such local factors as the re-emergence of Mexico's 23rd of September Communist League as an active terrorist group. But because of the tighter security measures that have been introduced at US military and diplomatic installations, the continuing lure of potentially lucrative ransom or extortion payments, and the symbolic value of US firms (e.g., as "capitalistic foreign exploiters" of the local working class), there is a real danger that terrorist attacks on the US business community abroad will become even more frequent in the future.

Two developments during 1976 bear special note. First, the defensive measures taken by US firms contributed to a shift in terrorist tactics. Thus,

[3] A group calling itself the Che Guevara Internationalist Brigade claimed credit for assassinating the Bolivian ambassador to France in May, the bombing of the Argentine embassy in Rome in July, and three more bombings in Rome in September (the US Information Service and Brazilian Airlines offices and the Chilean embassy to the Vatican).

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the number of assassinations and armed assaults have increased, while kidnapings have declined. And as American executives have gradually been withdrawn, their foreign-born replacements have been victimized in increasing numbers.

The second development stems from a single event: the assassination by local terrorists of the three Rockwell International executives in Tehran on 28 August 1976. The number of victims was small. But the terrorists were eminently successful in drawing attention to the inviting target posed by the burgeoning community of American civilian advisers and technicians. Indeed, despite the fact that so far there have been no further attacks on non-official Americans in Iran, the waves that the August incident created within US business and governmental circles have yet to subside.

Cuban Exiles, Croatian Extremists, and the Jewish Defense League

An upsurge in international terrorist attacks mounted by groups that are either based in the US or that have strong organizational links to certain segments of the US population caused considerable difficulty and embarrassment for the US government during 1976. The furor caused by the hijacking of a TWA passenger plane to Paris by Croatian extremists in September—the most spectacular of the eight terrorist incidents attributed to Yugoslav expatriates last year—provides a case in point.[4] For their part, militants believed to be associated with the Jewish Defense League staged at least seven attacks against Soviet, East European, Arab, and UN-connected targets in the US. (They also struck at Pan American Airlines property on two occasions: the first time to discourage that company from serving as cargo agent for Aeroflot, the second to protest its regularly scheduled flights to Syria and Iraq.)

Cuban exile groups operating under the aegis of a new alliance called the Coordination of United Revolutionary Organizations were particularly active during the second half of the year. They were responsible for no less than 17 acts of international terrorism (at least three of which took place in the US). Statistically, this matches the record compiled by the various Palestinian terrorist groups during the same period. But largely because the Cuban exile operations included the October bombing of a Cubana Airlines passenger aircraft, their consequences were far more bloody. Moreover, the latter incident prompted Fidel Castro to renounce the 1973 US-Cuban

[4] Since its perpetrators faced almost certain capture, the TWA hijacking also illustrates the overriding importance that terrorists often attach to gaining publicity for their cause.

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memorandum of understanding concerning hijackers of aircraft and vessels—an action which took effect on 15 April 1977 upon expiration of the required six-month grace period.[5]

Efforts to Develop New and More Effective Countermeasures

Together with the Carlos-led raid on the OPEC ministerial meeting in Vienna in December 1975, the Entebbe hijacking played a key role in inspiring both the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism that was adopted by the Council of Europe on 10 November 1976[6] and the proposal for an international convention against the taking of hostages that West Germany had placed before the UN General Assembly some six weeks earlier. But despite the attention that these initiatives have received, it remains to be seen whether either of them will result in a significantly more effective international regime for controlling terrorism.

The European convention purports to make extradition or prosecution mandatory for individuals responsible for a wide variety of terrorist acts. But at least as far as extradition is concerned, the room allowed for discretionary exceptions makes the treaty little more than a declaration of good intent. Moreover, some Council members have made it clear from the outset that they view the convention with considerable reserve.

On 9 December the Legal Committee of the UN General Assembly passed a resolution directing a 35-member ad hoc committee to draft a convention against the taking of hostages along lines proposed by West Germany. The echoes of the old controversy over *justifiable* versus *illegal* political violence that emerged during the debates that preceded the voting suggest that this will be no easy task. The Germans have sought to minimize the grounds for conflict by scrupulously avoiding any mention of the word terrorism in the draft text that they have prepared for the committee's consideration. Even so, it is not certain that the group will have an agreed draft in hand by the time the next General Assembly session opens in September 1977.

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[5] Seventy-three people were killed when the Cubana plane went down. Most of the victims were Cubans, but 11 were Guyanese. Because of this, and because Prime Minister Forbes Burnham publicly accused the US of complicity, the incident also precipitated a period of increased tensions in US-Guyanese relations.

[6] Passed unanimously by the 19-member Council the convention was opened for signature on 27 January 1977. Two member states, Malta and Ireland, have so far refused to sign it. In any event, the convention will not come into force until at least three Council members have ratified it. Thereafter, it will be binding on only those countries and such others as may subsequently complete the ratification process. It is not open to accession by nations that are not members of the Council of Europe.

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The Implications for 1977

It is evident from casting last year's experience with international terrorism into historical perspective that while a few broad trends can be identified, these have been accompanied and conditioned by relatively wide fluctuations in the nature and intensity of the violence involved. Similarly, the roster of groups engaged in international terrorist activity has been in constant flux.[7]

These oscillations in the pattern and level of terrorist activity—which are attributable to the operation of a multitude of factors—render specific predictions about the future dimensions of this threat, even over the short term, hazardous at best. Nonetheless, it is clear that the problem will persist. And while it is not possible to forecast the precise level and composition of international terrorist activity in 1977, the foregoing analysis does provide a rough guide as to its likely general contours.

First as suggested in earlier discussion, the *carryover* of the trends and problem areas that were associated with the problem of international terrorism last year will probably be extensive. Specifically:

- It seems likely that terrorist attacks on the overseas facilities and employees of US corporations and their foreign subsidiaries will continue to pose a particularly troublesome problem.

- Continuation of vigorous antiterrorist campaigns in Argentina and other Latin American countries may well result in a further "export" of Latin American terrorism to Europe.

- The development and implementation of more effective international countermeasures will continue to be impeded by differing moral perspectives, a broad resistance to any such infringement of sovereignty as would be implied in an inflexible curtailment of the right to grant political asylum, and a natural reluctance on the part of many states to commit themselves to any course of action that

[7] Instability and a distinct ephemeral quality have been characteristic of most of the 140-odd organizations that have been linked to international terrorist incidents over the past ten years. Indeed, some of these groups never existed at all, having been conjured up as fictional entities in order to shield the true identity of the perpetrators of particularly shocking or politically sensitive acts. A far larger number have either succumbed to local counterterrorist campaigns or fragmented under the impact of personal rivalries or growing disagreements over goals and tactics. The net growth in the number of active international terrorist formations has, in fact, been as much attributable to the splintering of old groups as to the emergence of entirely new ones.

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might invite retribution—either by terrorist groups or by states sympathetic to the terrorists' cause.[8]

- Despite the sobering impact of the Entebbe affair, there would seem to be a good chance that the incidence of hijackings will match or exceed the level recorded in 1976.[9]

- Governmental assistance to—and cooperation among—terrorist groups will continue to enhance the capabilities of such ultra-militant organizations as the PFLP.

At the same time, however, 1977 is likely to be characterized by some discontinuities and new developments as well. The odds are, for example, that Cuban exile activity will taper off somewhat.[10] On the other hand, regional conflicts outside the Middle East or contentious issues of many sorts could spawn new campaigns of international terrorism.

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[8] Ironically, the obvious discomfiture displayed by both Paris and Bonn in their handling of the highly publicized Abu Daud affair served to document the persistence and force of these inhibiting factors just days before the new European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism was opened for signature.

[9] In this regard, it should be noted that PFLP leader George Habbash told a correspondent from West Germany's *Der Stern* magazine in early February 1977 that while his organization planned no such action, he personally expected other embittered Palestinian formations to launch a new wave of hijackings.

[10] The record suggests that no group can long sustain a high intensity campaign of terror without running up against some very serious practical problems in terms of (1) depletion of resources, (2) factional divisions, (3) erosion of international sympathy or support, or (4) more vigorous countermeasures (at least at the national level). In short, while the internal dynamics of a campaign of terrorist violence tend to create pressures for escalation, the process would appear to be to some degree self-limiting.

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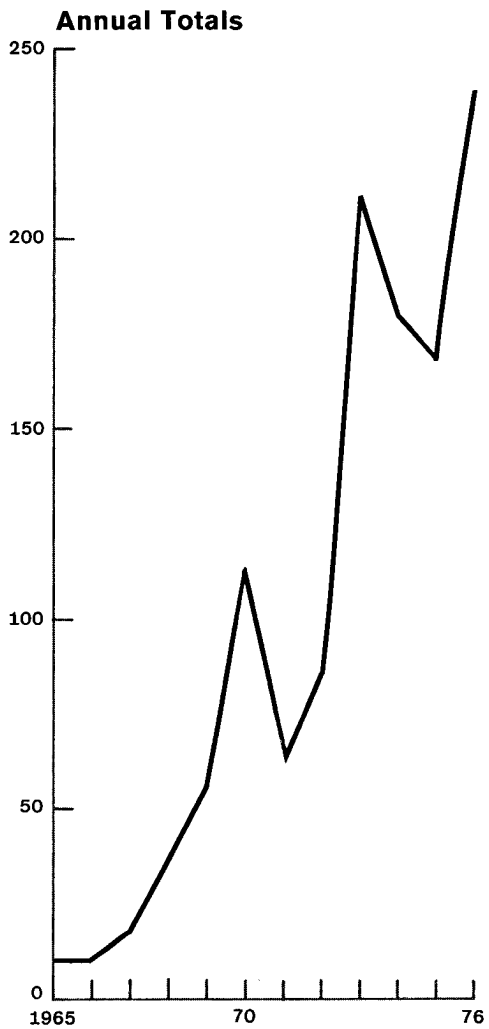
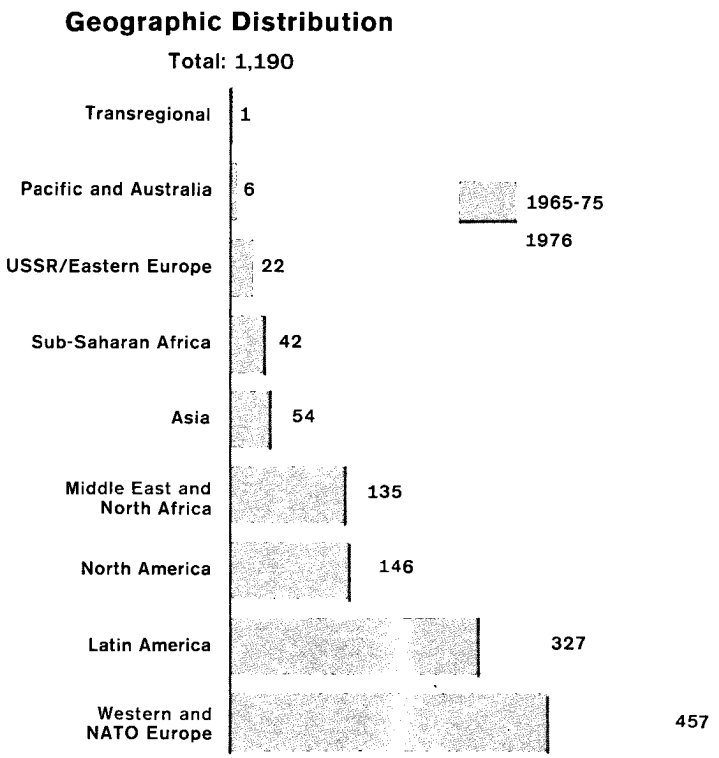
Figure 1

International Terrorist Incidents, 1965-76*





*The statistics presented here and in the charts and tables that follow exclude terrorist attacks on US and allied personnel and installations in Indochina. They also exclude most of the mutual assassination efforts and cross-border operations associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict. (The only exceptions in this regard are incidents that either victimized noncombatant nationals of state located outside the principal arena of conflict or were of such a nature that they became the subject of widespread international concern and controversy.) On the other hand, related but separately targeted actions undertaken by a single terrorist group were counted as individual incidents, even when they were staged on the same day and in close proximity to one another. Similarly, terrorist operations that aborted during execution (as opposed to those that were abandoned or countered during the planning or staging phases) were also counted. Obviously, the employment of other selection criteria could yield far different results. Hence it must be emphasized that this data should be viewed as proximate.

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Figure 2

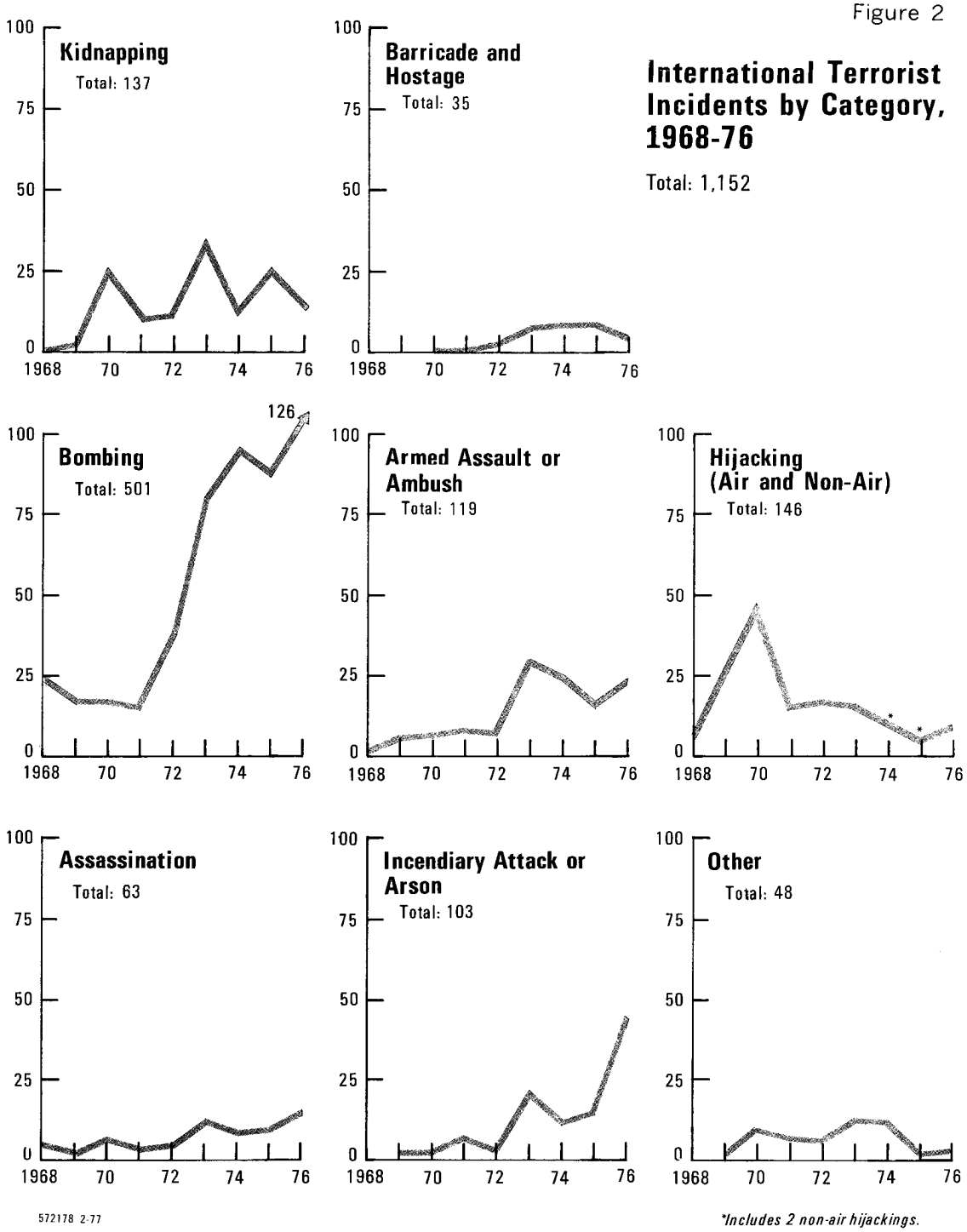

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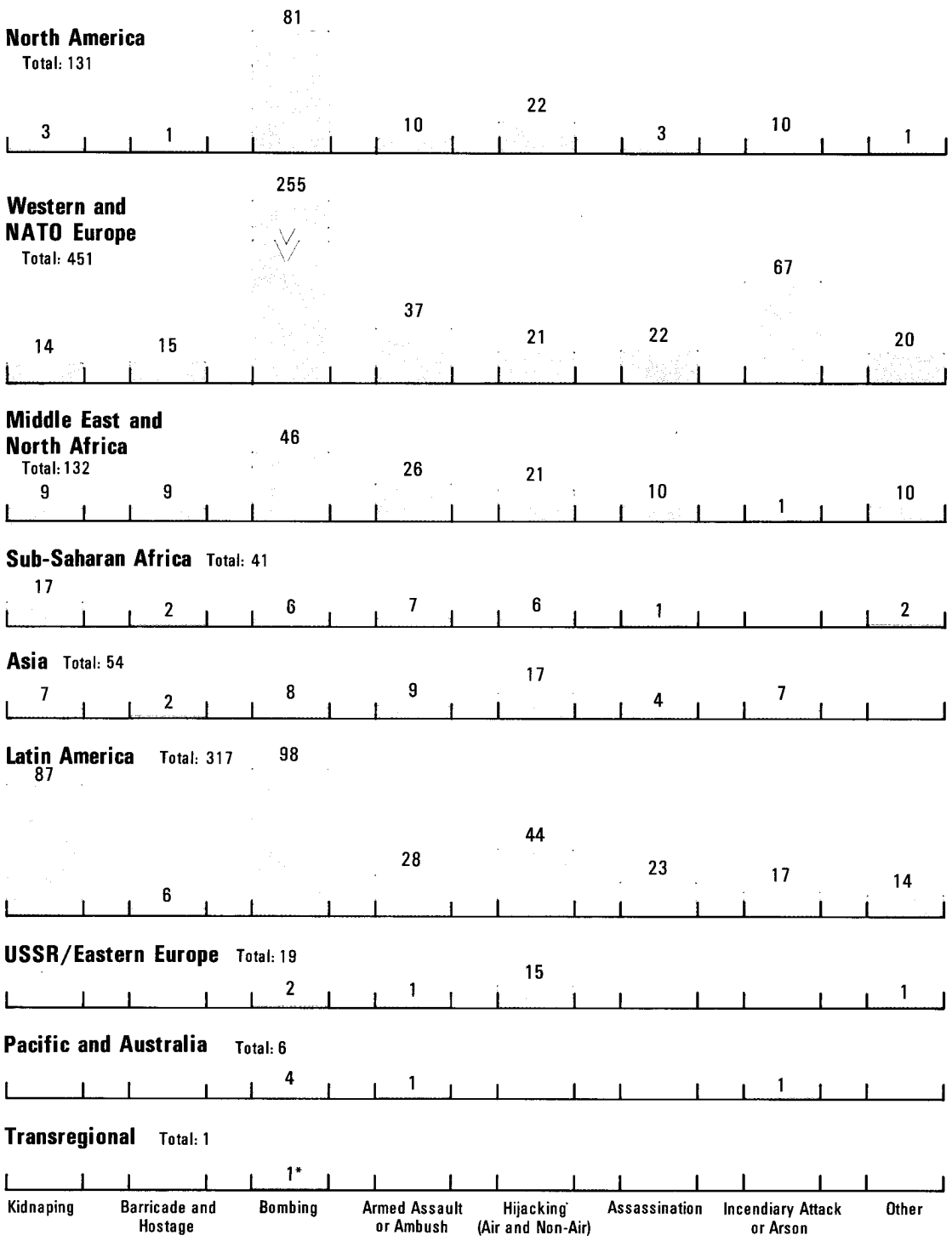
Figure 3

Geographic Distribution of International Terrorist Incidents by Category, 1968-76



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*Mass letter bomb mailing.

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INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS DIRECTED AGAINST US CITIZENS OR PROPERTY[1]

	KIDNAP	B & H	BOMB	ASS'LT	HIJACK[2]	ASSASS	INCEND	OTHER	TOTAL
1968-1976									
Total incidents	137	35	501	119	146	63	103	48	1,152
US citizens or property victimized	64	5	166	40	30	22	45	19	391
1968									
Total incidents	1	0	24	2	6	4	0	0	37
US citizens or property victimized	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	5
1969									
Total incidents	3	0	17	5	25	2	2	1	55
US citizens or property victimized	2	0	9	1	1	1	1	1	16
1970									
Total incidents	26	1	17	6	47	6	2	9	114
US citizens or property victimized	15	0	12	4	16	3	1	5	56
1971									
Total incidents	10	1	15	8	14	3	6	6	63
US citizens or property victimized	4	0	12	4	7	0	5	6	38
1972									
Total incidents	11	3	38	6	16	4	3	5	86
US citizens or property victimized	1	0	18	2	3	0	1	1	26
1973									
Total incidents	34	8	81	29	15	12	20	12	211
US citizens or property victimized	18	2	34	14	0	3	12	2	85
1974									
Total incidents	12	9	95	24	9	8	11	11	179
US citizens or property victimized	5	1	32	6	2	2	7	2	57
1975									
Total incidents	26	9	88	15	5	9	15	1	168
US citizens or property victimized	13	1	18	6	0	3	6	0	47
1976									
Total incidents	14	4	126	24	9	15	44	3	239
US citizens or property victimized	5	1	30	3	1	7	12	2	61

1. For the most part, incidents in which American citizens or property were victimized by chance have been excluded from these statistics. Examples from 1976 include the 27 June hijacking of an Air France plane (the Entebbe affair), the 11 August assault on El Al passengers at the Istanbul airport, and the 21 September bombing of the former Chilean ambassador to the United States' personal auto.
2. Excludes numerous non-terrorist skyjackings, many of which victimized US aircraft.

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BREAKDOWN OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ATTACKS ON US CITIZENS OR PROPERTY IN 1976, BY CATEGORY OF TARGET

TARGET	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS
US officials (civilian or military) or their property	7
US installations or property	15
US businessmen	3
US business facilities or commercial aircraft	21
Foreign employees of US firms	12
US private citizens	3
Total	**61**

INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CUBAN EXILE GROUPS

	KIDNAP	B & H	BOMB	ASS'LT	HIJACK	ASSASS	INCEND	OTHER	TOTAL
1968-1975	0	0	34	4	0	1	0	0	39
1976[1]	0	0	12	3	0	1	0	1	17

1. All but two of these incidents were staged during the second half of the year. The statistics presented exclude a few cloudy cases, e.g., the Letelier affair in September, in which Cuban exile complicity is strongly suspected.

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FEDAYEEN OR FEDAYEEN-RELATED INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS, BY CATEGORY

	KIDNAP	B & H	BOMB	ASS'LT	HIJACK	ASSASS	INCEND	OTHER	TOTAL
1968-1975									
Total incidents	123	31	375	95	137	48	59	45	913
Fedayeen or Fedayeen-related	8	18	48	35	19	13	3	15	159
1976									
Total incidents	14	4	126	24	9	15	44	3	239
Fedayeen or Fedayeen-related	0	3	3	4	2	1	4	0	17

FEDAYEEN OR FEDAYEEN-RELATED INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS, BY YEAR

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	TOTAL
Total incidents	37	55	114	63	86	211	179	168	239	1,152
Fedayeen or Fedayeen-related	3	10	21	10	19	46	33	17	17	176

TARGETS OF FEDAYEEN OR FEDAYEEN-RELATED INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS IN 1976, BY NATIONALITY

ARAB: 12 ISRAELI: 2 US: 1 OTHER: 2

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